

PRESENT TENSE

the newsletter for CAP public affairs officers

JUNE 2003



CIVIL AIR PATROL
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

INSIDE

MORE CLEARLY CLARY

Virginia Wing PAO Linda Utting rose to the occasion when Brig. Gen. Dave Clary arrived on her doorstep for a CAP glider ride. Follow the process that resulted in substantial media coverage, including a feature in the venerable *Washington Post*. **Page 2**

CAP IN THE SPOTLIGHT

High-profile volunteer programs carry built-in publicity and offer golden opportunities to let CAP shine. **Page 3**

ALL IN THE SEMANTICS

Wordsmithing is more than just grammar and punctuation. Though the fine points of phrasing are often transparent to the reader, they affect interpretation. See how this applies to writing about CAP. **Page 4**

HQ STRAT COM

Kelly Riddle, who dogs the details for CAP's NASCAR program, starts every day in high gear. **Page 4**

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Present Tense is the official monthly publication for public affairs officers of the Civil Air Patrol, and is produced by Melanie LeMay in the Strategic Communications and Planning Directorate, CAP National Headquarters, Maxwell AFB, Ala. All copy is written by Melanie LeMay unless otherwise noted.

Is there something you'd like us to cover in *Present Tense*? Contact Melanie LeMay at mlemay@capnhq.gov or call her at (334) 953-5320.

Doing more than what's expected means

Never an ordinary day



Photo courtesy of Mike Odle

South Dakota Wing PAO Mike Odle parries questions from reporter Robin Roff of KOTA Territory News after a Civil Air Patrol Cessna C-172 made a forced landing in a field north of Flandreau, S.D., April 2, 2002.

From his quarterly reports to his custom publications, PAO Mike Odle always puts in extra effort

Melanie LeMay
Public Relations Specialist

You remember the Mike Odle type from school. When you turned in your book report on notebook paper, his was typed. When you built a model volcano from papier mache, his was painted plasticene, mounted on plywood, with little trees and villages glued around the perimeter. The teachers loved him. So did the scholarship people. And so did his employers when he landed that big job years down the road.

Fact is, the world rewards those like Odle, who won't settle for doing just enough to get by. The ones

who put in extra effort eventually get noticed, and for people who deal with the media, getting noticed is the golden key to success.

As PAO for the South Dakota Wing, Mike Odle has made a name for himself with the local media. He's also made a name for himself with headquarters XPC. In both cases, he's known not only for the sheer quantity of public affairs materials he generates, but also for the eye-catching way he packages those products.

A typical quarterly report from Odle is actually a small booklet, spiral bound with a color cover. It does include the requisite PAO

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A soaring success

When PAO Linda Utting found out she'd have an Air Force VIP on hand for a Virginia Wing cadet glider encampment at Winchester in March 2003, she had already laid the groundwork for dealing with the media.

Utting usually sends out press releases at least two weeks in advance. This time, however, she had only about a week to pull everything together. "I already have most of the local media set up on my computer fax," she said, "but I added even more for this event, covering about a 50-mile radius around Winchester."

She soon got calls from local newspaper and television stations. "I already knew one newspaper reporter who called," she said, "and we picked up our acquaintance like old friends. I find that's often true with the reporters I meet. If I don't know them, I try to relate to them as if – to borrow a phrase from my daughter – those reporters are 'just good friends I haven't met yet.'"

"Several new reporters from other publications showed up for this event," Utting said. "As soon as they arrived, I went up and introduced myself and gave them a press packet I'd already prepared, including my business card, which I've found to be really important for followup questions."

"And of course, I asked for their cards, too, so I'm now accumulating quite a nice Rolodex with media contacts."

During the event, Utting made sure the



Photo by Marc Huchette, CAP National Headquarters

Air Force Director of Homeland Security Brig. Gen. Dave Clary talks with Virginia Wing cadets March 9, 2003 after returning from an orientation glider flight in Winchester, Va.

reporters all met the main people of the day. "I always clear it with the key people before I say they're available for interviews," she said. "Then I make sure the reporters know which people can best answer which questions."

Finally, she remained alert to everyone's comings and goings, always ready to help. "I never let the media run loose," she said. "That's important, because there may be sensitive information in sight."

Interestingly, Utting said, a reporter from the *Washington Post* showed up for the event unannounced. "And sure

enough, she was the one who called me at home later to ask a followup question. I was so glad she had my card and knew how to contact me."

As a result, the *Post* ran a feature story, with photos, on Clary's glider orientation. A local TV station was so enthusiastic about the flight that reporters promised to arrange a media fly-along for a future date.

"You can't always count on the media's attending an event," Utting said. "They go with the breaking news, and something might upstage you. But when they do come, it pays to be prepared."

Cool Web sites for PAOs

AP Stylebook – Want your very own copy of the *AP Stylebook*?

The 2003 edition of the *AP Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*, with an Internet guide and glossary, is now available in both print and electronic forms. A spiral-bound print version costs \$12.50. Read about the new editions, or order a copy, at www.apstylebook.com.

Media lists – Learn how to research and create your own media list with the quick tutorial on this site. Included is a sample media list record to show you how to set up your database, along with links to other helpful sites.

www.spinproject.org/resources/medialists/creating.php3

LATEST CAP STATS

CAP Membership as of April 30, 2003

Cadets	27,473
Seniors	37,197
TOTAL	64,670

Need the latest CAP fact sheet?

Go online at www.capnhq.gov and click on News and Issues, Inside CAP, and then Tools for PAOs.

Look for ways to help CAP Step into the volunteer spotlight

Though volunteering is often an unsung gift of time and talent, many organizations throughout the country work hard to recognize those who make our communities better, safer places to live and work.

You can gain some well-deserved spotlight time for some of your deserving members, or even your whole unit or wing, by participating in volunteer programs and by nominating CAP members for volunteer recognition awards. Here are just a few of the opportunities out there:

Daily Points of Light Award www.pointsoflight.org

This award is given each weekday to honor recipients who "exemplify the best of volunteerism, a sense of caring and responsibility for others that connects citizens and solves community problems." Winners can be groups or individuals.

Join Hands Day www.joinhandsday.org

This "national day of volunteering" is

held each year on the third Saturday in June. It focuses on building relationships through youth and adult partnership volunteering. You establish a project in advance, carry it out and then become eligible for national excellence awards. Some of these carry a prize of \$1,000, which could come in handy for your squadron.

Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, www.prudential.com

Sponsored by Prudential Insurance Company and the National Association of Secondary Principals, these awards recognize middle and high school students who have demonstrated exemplary community service.

Make A Difference Day 800-416-3824 or www.makeadifferenceday.com

This is another program that requires that you preregister your project. In some cases, major companies may ante up for the supplies required to carry out your plan. You then carry out your project on national Make A



Difference Day (Oct. 25) and report the results. Newman's Own food company funds the major awards for this program, including 10 prizes of \$10,000 each.

All these programs, and many others, which you can find by researching "volunteer programs" on the Internet, offer you the chance to publicize your unit's work. With enough advance notice, local media may want to cover your project from start to finish, and if you win a major award, your good press is guaranteed.



Can't find *PresentTense* online?

PresentTense is mailed out in hard-copy format in each month's unit mailout from CAP National Headquarters. If you miss your hard copy, however, you can always print out the current edition (and all previous editions since October 2002) from the headquarters Web site.

We save each edition of *PT* on the headquarters Web site as a PDF file, which you can print out on four 8.5 x 11 pages using the Adobe Acrobat reader (a free downloadable bit of software – go to www.adobe.com).

To find *PT* on the headquarters Web site:

1. Go to www.caphq.gov

2. Scroll down and click on **CAP Directorates.**

3. Click on **"Strategic Communications."**

4. Under **Strategic Communications**, *PresentTense* is the fifth listing. Click on it to obtain a list of all editions available for download.

5. Click on the edition you want. The Acrobat reader program should open up on your computer and then display the document.

Since the document is in PDF format, you won't be able to edit it, but when you print it out, it should come out of your printer exactly as it appears on your screen.

Kelly Riddle: Working in overdrive

That time-honored Southern salute to the world's extroverts, "never met a stranger," might have been coined especially for Kelly Riddle, the motorsports marketing assistant for headquarters Strategic Communications. She's the unabashedly friendly voice you'll find on the other end of the phone if you ever call about the business end of the CAP NASCAR program.

Whether it's handling track credentials, scheduling the show car or tracking NASCAR merchandise, Riddle attacks the task with energy – and speed.

"I don't like to sit still," she admits. "I like to be working, doing, talking ... When I interviewed for this job, I thought it would be exciting, and I haven't been disappointed. There's so much work to do all the time that nobody around here is ever bored – or boring!"

Riddle's B.S. degree from Auburn

University focused on marketing and management, so she's in her element working in Strategic Communications. When she's not tracking NASCAR, she's handling conference sponsorships and supporting headquarters' efforts to build strategic partnerships with hours of research and telephone calls.

At 24, Riddle is already driving toward a successful future family life. She's planning a wedding with longtime boyfriend Michael, and practicing her parenting skills by spoiling her big hunk of a boxer, Wishbone.

A product of Tallapoosa County, Alabama, Riddle says she'll never go back to the small-town lifestyle of her childhood. No matter how fast she moves into the big leagues, however, she'll always take with her that enviable ease in dealing with all kinds of people, a small-town trait that translates into big-time personality.



Kelly Riddle and her significant other, Michael Findley, know exactly how to roll out the red carpet of Southern hospitality.

NEXT MONTH

Finally, HQ XPC has a multimedia specialist in house. Meet Marc Huchette, the man who is helping bring CAP public affairs into the 'New Media' age.

a matter of ~~symantix~~ semantics

Choose one. CAP is:

- (a) the U.S. Air Force auxiliary.
- (b) the auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force.

If you think there's no difference, you're missing a fine point in semantics. As PAO Maj. Steven Heffel points out, the public may hear and read a distinction

between the two. He's found that saying "U.S. Air Force auxiliary" seems to imply that CAP is actually a branch of the Air Force, or even the Air Force itself. Saying "auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force" doesn't seem to have the same effect.

Part of the explanation lies in the concept intro-

duced first to the reader or listener. When the word *auxiliary* takes the lead, the reader processes the meaning of that word first ("something added to something else"), and then modifies the concept with the follow-up descriptor, "Air Force." When the term *Air Force* comes first, the reader conceptualizes the

Air Force as a whole, but then may have trouble reconciling the concept of an "auxiliary" in connection with the huge U.S. Air Force.

Those writers and speakers who understand how people process words and information are the ones who communicate most clearly and successfully.

Never ordinary, continued from page 1

Quarterly Report, CAP Form 190-1, but there's much more. Odle includes an analysis of the quarter, listing what went right with his PA program, as well as what he plans to improve.

He includes a copy of each press release, a PowerPoint presentation he may have given at a unit or wing seminar, along with a list of his unit PAOs.

Odle also produces spinoffs of headquarters materials. He and his PA staff have created a Senior Member Flight/Squadron Orientation Program book specific to South Dakota. It's a giveaway for visitors to squadron

meetings in the South Dakota Wing, and tells them not only about CAP in general, but also about CAP programs in their own locale.

Mike and Co. have even created a 2002 Report to the South Dakota State Legislature (sample page at right), borrowing from the layout of the 2002 CAP Annual Report to Congress, but customizing each section to reflect the specific work done by South Dakota Wing.

Next month: What makes Odle run

CAP RESPONDS IN WAKE OF SOUTH DAKOTA WILDFIRES

CAP RESPONDS IN WAKE OF SOUTH DAKOTA WILDFIRE

"I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MUCH THEY SAVED US, BUT A GREAT DEAL OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS. THERE IS ALWAYS A POTENTIAL FOR A LIGHT TO TURN INTO A MAJOR WILDFIRE."

Beth Adams, Wildland Fire Suppression Public Information Officer

CAP's role in fire detection

When a fire is spotted, pilots relay information to CAP's Incident Command Center, or ICCC, the central command center for the entire CAP system. The ICCC then coordinates the response, including the location of the fire, the type of fire, and the resources available. CAP's role is to detect the fire and relay the information to the ICCC.

Transporting

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WITHOUT CIVIL AIR PATROL, 42 FIRES MAY HAVE TURNED DISASTROUS IN THE BLACK HILLS.

According to Adams, "Because CAP was on top of those fires and got out there first, some of the 42 fires spotted made it past 10 acres." "On one particular fire, CAP spotted it 10 miles and started work to battle the flames."

Why all the spot fires in the Black Hills, and why such a need for CAP's assistance? "When a firestorm goes through, lightning strikes will inevitably spark dozens of new spots," explains Adams. "This was one main reason for calling the Civil Air Patrol. We needed someone to handle the flames."

"Due to the lightning storm that traveled through the area, CAP was dispatched as soon as weather conditions permitted and began their spotting mission."